

Governor Corzine's Talking Points for Yale Climate Change Summit

REMARKS FOR YALE GOVERNORS CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT

First of all, I want to thank Yale University, the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and all the organizers for convening this vital and timely conference.

I also commend my fellow Governors here today and Premier Charest for having the foresight and fortitude to engage the issue of global warming, and to act.

Global problems require global solutions....however, in the case of U.S. global warming policy, those solutions are emerging from a core group of innovative and committed state and local leaders.

From Governor Schwarzenegger' establishment of clean car standards, to the Midwestern Governors' establishment of serious greenhouse gas reduction targets, to the leadership of ten northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states to form the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**....states all across the country to taking the lead on developing aggressive, innovative, and cost effective policies to battle global warming.

The states are not only serving their traditional role as **laboratories** for sound policy, but we are also thrust into a role as **leaders**.

I believe that to address a problem of this magnitude, we have to set ambitious, comprehensive, long-term goals.

So last year, I signed legislation that sets statewide limits for stabilizing New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2020 and reducing emissions to 80% below 2006 levels by 2050.

And I'm proud that over 80 New Jersey mayors have signed onto the Mayors Climate Agreement sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

New Jersey continues to work with our colleagues in other states – not just in the northeast and the mid-Atlantic, but also in the Midwest and Western regions of the country as well.

And we are engaging internationally through the International Carbon Action Partnership – ICAP.

Like our friends in other states, **New Jersey is not in a position to wait for action on the part of the federal government.**

I have taken important actions in the fight against global warming because I believe New Jersey's citizens cannot afford to wait.

We cannot afford the serious, irreversible impacts that await our environment, our economy and our public health in New Jersey if we do nothing.

We cannot afford the effect of sea level rise on the state's densely developed coastline, and the increased incidence and severity of flooding.

We cannot afford the costs of climate change on our bustling ports, our vibrant agricultural sector and our coastal-based tourism industry.

And we cannot afford heat waves in our cities that will threaten public health.

And I took action because embracing changes in production and consumption present economic opportunities for New Jersey.

The global warming work we do today is the foundation for a strong economy tomorrow.

Investing in energy efficiency, green collar jobs, and new climate-neutral technologies is not just a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – it is a means to develop a robust and climate-friendly economy – both at the state and federal levels.

This effort can create economic drivers that build markets for energy efficiency and clean energy technologies, and spur technical innovation and job growth.

Moving aggressively now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will place us at a competitive advantage in the worldwide effort – and people will look to us for the newest and best technologies.

With bold leadership, America can rise to the challenge and in doing so, create another wave of economic prosperity that can carry us well into the future – not unlike the space-exploration race of the 1960s and beyond that pushed the envelope of our knowledge and sparked innovation in a number of areas.

And most importantly, I took action because state and local leadership will drive federal action – which is the reason we are here today.

So today I call on all of us to keep the pressure on and to do all we can to fight backsliding in Washington.

It is imperative for Congress to act, but it is also imperative for Congress to act to create meaningful – not symbolic – federal laws. Weak or marginal federal laws will only turn back the progress states have made.

Each day, additional states and cities make commitments to fight the battle against global warming – regardless of whether they are “red” or “blue” – in large part because of the vacuum of leadership at the federal level.

While states are currently taking the lead, we need federal action to set minimum energy-performance requirements that allow businesses to make long-term capital planning decisions.

Absent any unifying federal policy that sets minimum requirements, multiple state efforts will create an environment of uncertainty for business.

Federal monies need to be made available to states who are leading in the development of policies on this issue, acknowledging the critical role that those states’ planning and actions have on the development of federal programs.

And we need to join with our mayors in supporting their call for an Energy Efficiency Block Grant program that will prime the pump for green-energy and green-job training initiatives to spur local economic development, employment opportunities and economic growth across the United States.

The long-term well-being of New Jersey and other states also depends on a reengagement by the federal government in international negotiations to further develop a global response to climate change.

The fact is, although states can and should be leaders, no effort will be completely successful until world leaders come to terms with the urgency and scope of the threat – and act accordingly.

The encouraging news – as evidenced by today’s meeting – is that the states are not only aggressively developing innovative policies that result in greenhouse gas reductions hand-in-hand with economic growth, but the states are also working together – as a cohesive force – to push for meaningful change at the federal level.

I look forward to engaging you all in this critical dialogue today.

Thank you.